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Message Text

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PAGE 01 EC BRU 04551 051624Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00
COME-00 EB-07 FRB-03 INR-07 NSAE-00 EPG-02 SP-02
STR-04 TRSE-00 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 L-03 AGRE-00
/076 W
----------060831Z 018721 /22
R 051509Z MAY 77
FM USMISSION EC BRUSSELS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3715
INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
ALL EC CAPITALS
USMISSION OECD PARIS
USMISSION GENEVA

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ETRD, PFOR, EAID, BG, CE, IN, EEC
SUBJECT: RESULTS OF EC/BANGLADESH JOINT COMMISSION AND PROPOSED EC VISITS

REF: (A) 76 EC BRUSSELS A-478, (B) EC BRUSSELS 1370

1. SUMMARY: THE FIRST JOINT COMMISSION MEETING BETWEEN THE EC AND BANGLADESH OUTLINED AREAS FOR TRADE PROMOTION COOPERATION AND HIGHLIGHTED GOB CONVERNS OVER FOOD AID AND JUTE EXPORTS. EC COMMISSION OFFICIALS PLAN TO VISIT FACCA, COLOMBO AND NEW DELHI IN MID-MAY. END SUMMARY.

2. THE EC/BANGLADESH COOPERATON AGREEMENT CALLS FOR ANNUAL JOINT COMMISSION MEETINGS TO DISCUSS TRADE, COMMERCE AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION. THE FIRST SUCH MEETING WAS HELD IN BRUSSELS ON APRIL 18. THE MEETING WAS CHAIRED BY GOB
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PAGE 02 EC BRU 04551 051624Z

PRESIDENTIAL COUNSELOR FOR COMMERCE, MOHAMMAD RAHMAN, AND EC COMMISSIONER DAVIGNON. EC COMMISSON AND BANGLADESH EMBASSY OFFICIALS SAY THE MEETING MET THEIR EXPECTATIONS.

3. THE DISCUSSION FOCUSED ON CARRYING OUT THE EC/BANGLADESH JUTE AGREEMENT. THE GOB ASKED THE EC TO SHIFT UNUSED MEMBER STATE COUNTRY QUOTAS TO OTHER MEMBER STATES

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

IN ORDER THAT IT COULD EXPAND ITS JUTE EXPORTS. IT ALSO ASKED TO MOVE UP THE DATE FOR PHASING OUT IMPORT DUTIES ON JUTE PRODUCTS FROM JULY 1, 1978 TO JULY 1, 1977. (COMMENT: EC OFFICIALS MAY BE ABLE TO MET THE GOB HALF WAY BY ELIMINATING DUTIES ON JUTE AT THE BEGINNING OF 1978. THERE IS LITTLE LIKELIHOOD, HOWEVER, OF SHIFTING COUNTRY QUOTAS. END COMMENT.) THE EC ASKED TOE GOB TO PARTICIPATE IN A ROUND-TABLE TALK WITH INDIAN AND EUOPEAN JUTE TRADERS TO SEEK WAYS TO IMPROVE MARKETING OF JUTE PRODUCTS. GOB OFFICIALS, HOWEVER, ARE RELUCTANT TO PARTICIPATE WITH INDIA IN SUCH DISCUSSIONS, APPARENTLY FOR POLITICAL REASONS. COMMISSION OFFICIALS, NEVERTHELESS, PLAN TO GO AHEAD WITH THE MEETING, PROBABLY IN JUNE.

4. THE JOINT COMMISSION AGREED TO LOOK INTO A NUMBER OF PROJECTS TO PROMOTE GOB EXPORTS, SUCH AS JUTE WALLPAPER, FURNITURE, SHRIMP AND PRAWNS. THE EC PLANS TO PROVIDE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO IMPROVE THE DESIGN SPECIFICATIONS OF GOB EXPORTS. THE GOB ASKED FOR ASSISTANCE IN SETTING UP A TRADE INSTITUTE IN DACCA AND A DISPLAY CENTER IN EUROPE. THE GOB IS ALSO SEEKING EC HELP IN PROMOTING JOINT VENTURES TO DEVELOP ITS NATURAL GAS AND FISHERIES RESOURCES. THE COMMISSION PLANS TO PROVIDE FIVE OR SIX TECHNICIANS TO ASSIT THE GOB IN TRADE PROMOTION. IT IS ALSO CONSIDERING HOLDING A SEMINAR IN THE REGION ON ITS GSP.

5. THE GOB ASKED THAT THE EC RESERVE OF 30,000 MT OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 EC BRU 04551 051624Z

CEREAL FOOD AID FOR BANGLADESH BE RELEASED THIS YEAR. (REF B.) THIS WOULD BRING THE TOTAL 1977 PROGRAM UP TO 100,000 MT. BEFORE TAKING A DECISION ON SHIPPING THIS RESERVE, THE COMMISSION FIRST ASKED THE GOB TO SUBMIT PROPOSED PROJECTS FOR THE USE OF 1977 FOOD AID COUNTERPART FUNDS. COMMISSION OFFICIALS ADD THAT THEY EXPECT TO SHIP THIS RESERVE THE SECOND HALF OF 1977. THE GOB ADDED THAT THE RECENT MONSOONS HAD SERIOUSLY DAMAGED THIS YEAR'S CROP AND ASKED THE EC TO INCREASE ITS FOOD AID NEXT YEAR.

6. THE JOINT COMMISSION AGREED TO ESTABLISH TWO SUBCOMMITTEES WHICH WILL MEET AT LEAST TWICE BEFORE THE END OF THE YEAR. ONE COMMITTEE WILL ADMINISTER EC/BANGLADESH SECTORAL AGREEMENTS AND THE OTHER WILL LOOK INTO TRADE AND OTHER COOPERATION MEASURES. THE NEXT JOINT COMMISSION MEETING IS SCHEDULED TO BE HELD IN DACCA IN EARLY 1978.

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

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7. COMMISSION OFFICIALS ADD THAT EC COMMISSION VICE
PRESIDENT FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS HAFERKAMP PLANS TO VISIT
NEW DELHI ON ABOUT MAY 14-15. THIS WILL PRIMARILY BE
A GOODWILL VISIT, BUT THE GOI IS EXPECTED TO DISCUSS
RECENT EC QUOTA RESTRICTIONS ON ITS HANDLOOMED TEXTILE
EXPORTS TO THE EC. IT WILL ALSO LIKELY REQUEST
ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AND PERHAPS FOOD AID
FOR 1978, IF NEEDED EC COMMISSION DIRECTOR GENERAL
FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS HIJZEN PLANS TO VIST DACCA ON MAY 12-13
AND COLOMBO ON MAY 14-15. THESE VISIT WILL REVIEW
CURRENT RELATIONS.
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